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Reflecting Critical Pedagogy: Its Application to EFL Contexts and Criticism

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The primary goal of this paper was to develop a critical point of view to critical pedagogy when applied to EFL contexts. Critical pedagogy is more concerned about how language can affect personal and social change of teachers and students than it is with how to teach language effectively or in ways that encourage critical thinking on the part of teacher and students. For this goal, this paper introduces the definition, emergence and major constructs of critical pedagogy in a broad way at first. Then, this paper presents how critical pedagogy has an impact on ELT, focusing on how critical pedagogy is applied in ELT contexts and why the application of critical pedagogy in EFL can be criticized, through the review of empirical studies. Reflection of Korean English teaching situation and applicational difficulties of critical pedagogy in Korean ELT are followed.

[critical pedagogy/ELT/inequality/power relation/social inequality]

I. INTRODUCTION

The growing numbers of people in the world who have some familiarity with English have a tendency to accept English as the only international language used for wide communication for various purposes. Sharing information with others about ones' own countries, promoting tourism, and contributing to international scholarly exchange are some of the ways which English serves as a domestic language in world communication. People have recognized the impact of English on world communication and have promoted it as a medium of communication. Even non-English speaking countries have joined this promotion by increasing the number of people learning English. However, at the same time, the concern about dominance and power of English over social interaction of people in non-English speaking countries has been enormously increasing among English educators.

Beyond the impact of the political, cultural, and economic powers of English, the western judgment of the value which English contains has been considered to have a force which transfers to others and changes the pattern of social-cultural practices of people with different cultural backgrounds (Phillipson, 1992). Whether it is perceived as a profit-generative phenomenon or as having a detrimental effect on national identity, English Language Teaching (ELT) is clearly an international phenomenon.

Several types of research have been conducted, examining the practicality and potential influence English brings to others as well as the possibility of modification of English pedagogies developed by center-circle countries[1] to be appropriate in local contexts. Especially, in ELT, this kind of research has employed a critical view in order to investigate the implications and influence English teaching brings to learners by incorporating critical ideas into current practice of English teaching. The researchers who discussed English teaching and learning in historical contexts and in political positions and those who investigated the effect of English on non-native English speakers have shown great concerns of the influence from ELT principles developed by center-circle countries (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Peirce, 1995; Pennycook, 1999): Native speaker-only, English-only, and Authentic material-only, etc. Those researchers have emphasized the necessity of investigating those effects from a critical point of view and have investigated inequality observed in ESL/EFL educational settings under the name of critical pedagogy[2].

Concerning English education, critical pedagogy was referred to and addressed with different topics such as social identity and voice (Peirce, 1995), power (Auerbach, 1993; Pennycook, 1989), the morality of teaching (Johnston, Juhsz, Marken, & Ruiz, 1998), etc. However, the radical adoption of the critical pedagogical view of English teaching was started from attempts to locate English teaching within a broad social-political relation (Pennycook, 1999). It came from the recognition of the influence of the power of English pedagogies on periphery countries[3]. Critical pedagogy in ELT examines political power of

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[1] Center-circle countries indicate where English is used as the primary language such as Britain, America, or Australia.

[2] Several researchers (e.g., Atkinson, 1997, Pennycook, 1999) mentioned that there are some problems in assuming critical approaches to ELT to be critical pedagogy applied to ELT since critical pedagogy has problems to be commonly defined. However, most empirical research which are examined pedagogical means of implementing English teaching with critical approaches are considered to be conducted within critical pedagogy in a broad way due to the fact that the purpose of employing a critical view (or approach) is to point out the existing problems, and as a result, to make subjects be aware of them. Therefore, this paper considers critical pedagogy to be the term which includes both critical thinking and critical approaches in ELT.

[3] Periphery countries indicate where English is taught as a foreign language such as Japan, Korea, China, etc.

English and aims to make learners be aware of power and inequality that English brings to the classroom.

This paper attempts to examine the application of critical pedagogy to English teaching in EFL contexts and to resolve the issues raised by adopting center-circle countries' ELT methods to EFL contexts. This paper also endeavors to provide some criticism to the application of critical pedagogy in EFL contexts. In order to do this, this paper starts by examining the principles of critical pedagogy in education in a broad way, and then moves onto the application of critical pedagogy in EFL contexts and its criticism. Last, this paper reflects ELT in Korean contexts and describes problems in applying critical pedagogy to Korean ELT.

II. THEORETICAL GROUNDS OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

1. Definition of Critical Pedagogy

Even though the literature on critical pedagogy provides various attempts of researchers who tried to theorize and to operationalize challenges of critical pedagogy in educational contexts (Ellsworth, 1989), reaching a satisfactory definition of critical pedagogy is difficult since it is unwilling to prescribe what should be done by critical pedagogy. However, some broad trends can be identified by reviewing relevant literature.

Primarily, critical pedagogy is concerned with critiquing existing educational practices and institutions for the purpose of transforming education as well as society (Giroux & Simon, 1984). Thus, critical pedagogy, as Canagarajah (1999) pointed out, is named differently by researchers: transformative pedagogy (Pennycook, 1999), participatory approach (Auerbach, 1993), emancipatory literacy (Wink, 1997), critical education (Apple, 1971), pedagogies of resistance (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985), libratory teaching (Shor, 1987), radical pedagogy (Hooks, 1989), post-modern pedagogy (Giroux, 1992), border pedagogy (Giroux & McLaren, 1994), and pedagogies of possibility (Simon, 1987).

Pennycook (1994) mentioned that "critical pedagogy is fundamentally concerned with questions of schooling and inequality" (p. 691) and that it is based on the desire for social changes by showing whose interests are really served by existing forms of education in terms of social, political, and cultural powers. Giroux (1989) also developed the concern of critical pedagogy by suggesting that rather than accepting the notion that schools were vehicles of democracy and social mobility, "critical pedagogy unravels how schools reproduce the logic of capital through the ideological and material forms of privilege and domination that structure the lives of students from various class, gender, racial, and ethnic grouping" (p. 128). He also mentioned that critical pedagogy should be used to point to

"the transmission and reproduction of a dominant culture in schools" (p. 129) and to raise questions about the relationships between the margins and centers of power in school. Therefore, fundamentally, critical pedagogy can be regarded as a socio-political view of our understanding of how schools work with the centrality of politics and power (McLaren, 1998; Simon, 1987).

2. The Emergence of Critical Pedagogy

Even though Paulo Freire is considered to be the father of critical pedagogy by many educators after he raised the concept of banking knowledge[4] (Janmohamed, 1994), critical pedagogy owes a profound debt to the work of the Frankfurt school, which had its beginning before World War II. The critical theory of the Frankfurt school started to provide a radical theory and analysis of schooling "while annexing new advances in social theory and developing new categories of inquiry and new methodologies" (McLaren, 1998, p.163). Even though the Frankfurt school thinkers did not intend to develop a specific educational pedagogy, they were concerned about education in the subjects of knowledge, production, transformation and representation of reality in a broader sense. Critical pedagogy is a realization of this critical theory of the Frankfurt school in education.

Critical pedagogy came from the educators who developed and implemented the ideas started by critical theorists into educational theory. Critical pedagogy is commonly committed to reconstruct or decipher the power relations that produce "the subject, consciousness, identity, knowledge, and possibilities to act in and change reality" (Gur-Ze've, 2006, p. 9). It emphasizes the demonstration and challenge to the production of marginality, impotency, and violence of individuals and groups for the control and change of the present order of things, although many educational critical theorists addressed and applied different interpretation to various sub-categories of education in the name of critical pedagogy: For instance, Skutnabb-Kangas (1995) who defended the idea of a declaration of children's linguistic human rights; Ada (1993) who created her own emancipatory approach to teaching reading; and Giroux (1989) who focused on curriculum and how it is a way of organizing power, values, and knowledge.

Critical pedagogy was referred to and addressed with different topics such as social identity and voice (Peirce, 1995), power (Auerbach, 1993; Pennycook, 1989), and the morality of teaching (Johnston, et al., 1998) in relation to English education. However, the

[4] Knowledge is not just a bank of facts to be transmitted from the teacher to the student, but instead becomes a cognitive process undertaken by teachers and learners alike who discover how different types of information are given precedence within educational institutions (Janmohamed, 1994)

radical adoption of the critical pedagogical view of English teaching was started from attempts to locate English teaching within a broad social-political relation (Pennycook, 1999). It came from the recognition of the influence of the power of English pedagogies on periphery countries. Critical works in English teaching locate the process and the product of learning in various domains such as psychological, social, economic, cultural, political, or physical domains at the same time in which language learning takes place. Critical pedagogy in ELT examines political power of English and aims to make learners be aware of power and inequality that English brings to the classroom.

3. The Major Constructs of Critical Pedagogy

Although critical pedagogy is applied to various educational areas with different principles by its many adherents, there are several constructs which are common threads running through each area. The most important construct of critical pedagogy is that education is always political, never neutral (Auerbach, 1995; Giroux & Simon, 1988; McLaren, 1998; Pennycook, 1994, 1999): "Pedagogical choices about curriculum development, contents, materials, classroom processes, and language use, although appearing to be informed by apolitical professional consideration, are in fact, inherently ideological in natural" (Auerbach, 1995, p.10). Teachers commonly regard themselves as a neutral person who is contributing to students' welfare by helping them to communicate with others. They defend their actions by mentioning that teaching for students' welfare is their only focus and that politics should not be a concern of theirs. However, the moment when decisions about classroom teaching are made, personal as well as political values start to impede and play a significant role. These decisions are relative to the power practice. As pointed by many researchers (e.g., Giroux, 1989: Pennycook, 1989, 1999; Simon, 1987), education inevitably serves to perpetuate existing social relations through knowledge which reproduces a particular configuration of social, economical, and political interests of certain individuals or groups (Pennycook, 1989). Therefore, to the extent that knowledge of the dominant class is valued in institutions, it is the power of dominant groups that is perpetuated to learners through education (Auerbach, 1995).

The second construct of critical pedagogy is that education should be transformative (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1999). As mentioned already, critical pedagogy intends to unveil the realities of social, political, and cultural powers by revealing whose interests are served and whose voice is represented. Since current schooling serves the interests of a dominant group, resulting in the transmission and reproduction of the culture and belief of the dominant group through banking education, critical scholars insist that education should be dedicated to the emancipatory imperatives of social transformation (McLaren, 1998) as well as to question what is taken for granted in education. The focus of critical

pedagogy is changing the inequitable contexts where education takes place with regard to how the particular approach to education hopes to change things. Canagarajah (1999) stated that education must start with critiquing existing dominant and oppressive social and cultural institutional structures. Fundamentally, critical pedagogy seeks to work with students "in developing their understanding of the wider contexts in which they are learning" (Pennycook, 1999, p. 336). Critical pedagogy can therefore be used as a means of transformation which learners can use to be aware of their social conditions and challenges, and question the assumptions embedded in current dominant educational approaches.

The last construct of critical pedagogy is that education should be empowering. "Empowerment is both the purpose and the outcome of critical pedagogy" (Nieto, 1999, p.105). Students and teachers engage in learning and teaching as a mutual encounter with world. Critical pedagogy acknowledges the diversity of cultural, linguistic, and social classes of students and encourages students to use their knowledge acquired from different experiences to extend their learning. It also demands of students to use their knowledge to reflect on "multiple and contradictory perspectives to understand reality more fully" (Nieto, 1999, p. 105). Instead of reproducing the cycle of an inequitable social structure, by assimilating students into it, critical pedagogy insists that education should empower students so that they can liberate themselves from domination (Vandrick, 1995). Critical pedagogy is founded based on the belief that problems and issues should be examined from a variety of perspectives since there is no absolute right answer to most of these problems. The moment when students have the opportunity to view situations and events from various perspectives and begin to analyze and to question what they are learning, their critical thinking skill is promoted. As a result, the ability acquired through critical thinking, reflection, and action empowers students to find ways to solve problems they will encounter in the future.

It should not be assumed that there are only three constructs in critical pedagogy. In fact, there are many other constructs often emphasized by researchers. For instance, Pennycook (1999) insisted that education should generate conscientization[5] and that it should be the first step in critical pedagogy. Canagarajah (1999)[6] also mentioned that learning should be interpreted according to social practices and cultural traditions of different communities, and thus education in critical pedagogy should reflect communities' values of tradition and social practice at first.

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[5] The objective of conscientization is to power the knowledge and resources of groups by facilitating a learning process that becomes critical, transitive and dialogical consciousness, and then potentiality of liberation (Pennycook, 1999).

[6] Canagarajah (1999) introduces 6 tenets in critical pedagogy related to ELT. They are "learning as personal, situated, cultural, ideological, negotiated, and political" (p. 15-16).

III. CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND ELT

1. Critical Pedagogy of ELT

The expansion of English to the global arena brings a number of competing and conflicting arguments to English educators. Some educators viewed that English provides life chances, opportunities for economic success, and promotion of learners' social status (e.g., Patterson, 1989). On the other hand, other educators considered the expansion of English as a threat of western imperialism which focuses on maintaining its superior status in social structure of the periphery worlds (e.g., Pennycook, 1994; Park, 2006; Ricento, 1994): English disguises its fundamental purposes with the gesture of helping others (e.g., the periphery worlds) through language assistance in areas others need helps most such as technology. Critical pedagogy in ELT appeared to analyze the effect of western imperialism which is permeated on non-English speakers through English and to attempt to find out the hidden agenda which influenced students' behavior in a subtly pervasive manner. Since English learning cannot be considered as an entirely innocent activity (Phillipson, 1992), by employing the view point of critical pedagogy, English teachers attempted to understand English learning in relation to the larger socio-political realities and to "encourage students to make pedagogical choices that offer sounder alternatives to their living conditions" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 14).

Critical pedagogy relative to ELT opened up two important dimensions that have been crucially absent from a great deal of research in ELT. Critical pedagogy firstly promoted the study of questions concerning the relationship between L2 education and race, ethnicity, gender, class, minority languages, and so on (Kubota, 1999; Sullivan, 2000). Secondly, as pointed by Pennycook (1994), critical pedagogy promoted "orientations toward research that question the mainstream ELT approaches to knowledge formation and instead acknowledge the particular social and cultural locations of and political relations between the researcher and the subjects of research" (p. 692).

2. Two Major Models of Critical Pedagogy in English Teaching

Canagarajah (1999) mentioned that critical pedagogy could be interpreted by two different models[7], models of reproduction and of resistance. Models of reproduction look

[7] Although there might be other models which can be used to interpret critical pedagogy, this paper considers models explained by Canagarajah (1999) as two major competing models of

for "how students are conditioned mentally and behaviorally by the practices of schooling to serve the dominant social institutions and groups" (p.22) whereas resistance models explain "how there are sufficient contradictions within institutions to help subjects gain agency, conduct critical thinking, and initiate change" (p.22). These two models are derived from different theoretical orientations. While reproduction models of critical pedagogy came from structuralism and Marxism, resisting models of critical pedagogy are derived from post-structuralism.

Models of reproduction consider language to be a social symbol that constitutes the values of the speech community. In addition, these models regard knowledge to be formed and shaped by social interaction between the dominant (English center-circle countries) and the dominated (Periphery countries). These models assume that "knowledge is unilaterally owned and disseminated by the dominant groups" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 32) and that school is the place where knowledge of the dominant is transmitted to the dominated. According to reproduction models, English instruction is interpreted as the cause of the inequality between the dominant and the dominated as well as the result of socio-political inequality between these two groups. Phillipson's linguicism (1992)[8] is a representative frame which explains the dominance of center-circle ELT principles on English instruction in periphery countries under models of reproduction.

On the other hand, under models of resistance, the English class is considered to be a place where there is "a range of attitudes and motivations characterizing student resistance" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 196). These models regard English as a language of possibility for reconstructing social structures. Resistance models theorize "the possibility that the counter-knowledge of subaltern groups has its own critical insights to demystify the dominant ideologies and empower them to achieve their own interest" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 32). These models look at how students alternate the vernacular and English in a contextually advantageous manner to challenge the unequal distribution of symbolic and material rewards. Models of resistance also investigate the way that learners negotiate with English to gain positive identities, critical expression, and ideological clarity. Resistance models value local knowledge and culture. Under models of resistance, subordinate groups may discover the liberatory elements in their own cultures that will help them to develop a critical consciousness and to resist domination.

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critical pedagogy.

[8] Linguicism is "ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resource (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47).

3. Application of Critical Pedagogy in the Classroom of EFL Contexts

Basically, the application of critical pedagogy was performed under two competing models, models of reproduction and models of resistance as summarized in the above. Based on either model, students were given the opportunity to think about the social-political contexts where their learning occurred (e.g., Kubota, 1999; Sullivan, 2000). They practiced critical skills by "being engaged in a democratic model of teaching through which the students share power and authority with the teacher and are active participators in the process of curriculum and material design" (Santana-Williamson, 2000, p. 9). Acknowledging cultural and social inequality hidden in English learning, employing local culture and text into English teaching, participating language and project choice in the classroom, etc. are among the ways to demonstrate applying critical pedagogy to English teaching.

1) Awareness of Cultural and Social Inequality Hidden in English Learning

This issue was investigated under the reproduction models of critical pedagogy. As pointed out in the above, the main purpose of these models of critical pedagogy is to reveal the political relation of social structure by showing whose interests are really served through existing forms of education. Some research was conducted in EFL contexts in order to make students be aware of the effects of English learning on their unequal social and cultural status in the vein of linguistic imperialism (e.g., Cox & Assis-Peterson, 1999; Lin, 1999). Since language education does not teach only the target language itself and there is convincing evidence that foreign language learning can have potentially adverse effects on the recognition of social-cultural status of language learners (Canagarajah, 1999; Modiano, 2001; Phillipson, 1992), the need of research was urgently requested, which aimed to gain a better understanding of those effects on English language learners' behavior.

Many researchers (e.g., Lin, 1999; Modiano, 2001; Ricento, 1994) state that the dominance of English reproduces the unequal social status among English learners through education and maintains inequalities between English language users and other language users. Due to this unequal relationship between English and other languages, according to them, English learners might feel marginalized and position themselves in an inferior status compared to native English speakers. One of the ways critical pedagogy is applied in order to derive this cultural-social inequality (or imperialism) permeated in EFL contexts is to provide an opportunity for English instructors to recognize their role as an agent working for local purposes, not a medium conveying the western value which English contains.

Cox and Assis-Peterson (1999) attempted to investigate the degree of awareness of Brazilian teachers to critical pedagogy and the degree of recognition of their role in conveying the political and socio-cultural implications that permeate ELT. The results obtained from this research showed that unlike the researchers' expectations that most teachers would feel as alienated and colonized agents of US English power, all 40 Brazilian English teachers regarded being an English teacher as a symbol of prestigious status and that they were unaware of critical pedagogy. In this research, the 40 Brazilian English teachers had a tendency to treat English as a neutral language of global communication and saw themselves as altruistic agents of good, in that they prepared students to be successful in the international world. Moreover, they were not sensitive to students' voices if students' questions contained the international relationship evoked by language power since they thought that political issues relative to language were not an appropriate topic for English classes. Although these Brazilian teachers insisted that they taught English with considerations of practical benefits because English is an international language governing the world structure, it is important to distinguish these attitudes from those of Tanzanian teacher trainees observed in Vavrus (2002), which implemented similar research with Tanzanian English teacher trainees. It is because the latter was fully aware of the imperialism aspects of English teaching, whereas the former was not aware of or deliberately avoided those aspects due to economic and social benefits provided by English knowledge. 40 Brazilian teachers' attitudes to English are good examples of the effect of the dominant discourse of ELT since they considered teaching English as neutral and beneficial. In light of the fact that Cox and Assis-Peterson provided an opportunity for Brazilian English teachers to realize that their unawareness of hidden implications of English teaching made their students feel marginalized and in respect that this critical view made Brazilian teachers recognize cultural and social implications embedded in English, Cox and Assis-Peterson (1999) might be considered as one of the trials of applications to critical pedagogical thinking in the classroom of EFL contexts.

While Cox and Assis-Peterson (1999) focused on English teachers' recognition of social-cultural imperialism relative to their role, Lin (1999) looked at the effects of English on the transformation of students' social worlds in relation to economics and social status. She questioned whether "English in the class lesson is implicated in the reproduction of social inequalities in different contexts" (p. 393). Based on the database obtained from the researcher's ethnographic discourse study of eight classrooms in seven schools from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds in Hong Kong, she found that English in the classroom reproduced social inequalities in different contexts and concluded that "understanding existing classroom practices and their socio-cultural and institutional situatedness is a first step" (p. 411) towards the contribution of transformation to students' perception of surrounded social worlds. Her research indicated that there were struggles

some students experienced due to their unprivileged social-economic status. Because students' social-economic status couldn't provide students with English learning conditions which privileged students were already equipped with, students were reluctant to learning English when they competed with privileged students. However, one observation from her data showed that the agreement of selecting materials and teaching media facilitated learning effects of students through dialogue between students and a teacher whether students were privileged or not. This case indicated that appropriate selection of classroom language and textbooks encouraged students to participate in classroom activities and to view English learning as one way to empower them. Selecting appropriate learning materials like this is closely related to the following subsection which critical pedagogy focused on in EFL contexts.

2) Employing Local Culture and Local Text into English Teaching

Employing local culture into English teaching can be understood in the same vein as the idea that education should be situated in historical and social contexts. That is, social-cultural conditions should be considered due to its influence on how learners perceive and interpret the world around them. Kubota (1999, 2004) mentioned that cultural differences significantly influenced the ways people learned a new language. With examples being Japanese in the USA, she stated that cultures which students brought with them should not be abandoned since culture defined and formed individuals. Similarly, Canagarajah (1999) mentioned that the role of language education should be interpreted based on social-cultural conditions of learners' communities. Language contains and conveys cultural and social values of each language user. English contains English cultural and social values which might conflict with those of local language learners. This leads to realization that "the dependency on imported products has tended to undermine the alternative styles of thinking, learning, and interacting preferred by local communities" (Canagarajah, 1999, p.104).

As one way of applying critical pedagogy to English teaching, some researchers showed the effectiveness of employing local cultures in English teaching. According to this trial, local cultures were regarded as having an ability to provide the ideal learning conditions which learners could achieve better results of English learning, compared to not being included. Canagarajah (1993, 1999), Kramsch and Sullivan (1996), Sullivan (2000), and Peirce (1989) are examples of bringing local cultures into English classes within a critical pedagogical perspective. Canagarajah (1993) found that in the beginning, students in Tamil community had positive attitudes toward English and did not consider English as a threat to Tamil language and culture. However, soon he noticed that as time went by, they became frustrated and confused due to methodological differences of English instruction

between their own and those imported from center-circle countries. He also found that students had dual attitudes towards English because they faced the threats of "cultural alienation experienced intuitively or instinctively" (p. 621) as well as "the promises of a socioeconomic necessity acknowledged at a more conscious level" (p. 621). In addition, it was observed that these dual attitudes became stronger whenever they encountered discrepancies between students' local needs and the instructional purpose of provided courses. Interpreting these findings as resistant behaviors, Canagarajah (1999) reported another research in the same context, Tamil community. This time, he closely examined the strategies teachers adopted to accommodate or resist the methods popularized by professionals from center-circles since he observed the conflicts between newly introduced teaching methods and local traditional methods, resulting in confusion and frustration from both teachers and students before. What was observed from this research was that teachers' desire to implement a center-based new method resulted in failure, and that teachers and students negotiated to create an alternative pedagogy to meet the needs of both teachers and students, which was neither a new pedagogy nor a traditional pedagogy, but suited their learning contexts. This finding apparently indicated that the local need and culture played a role in mediating the learning approach and practice in English classes.

Similarly, Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) and Sullivan (2000) observed English learning in Vietnam and found that the English classes which seemed to be operated with center-circle countries' methods were actually operated with traditional teaching methods of Vietnam to meet their local learning condition. What was surprising from these observations was that English educators in Vietnam created an appropriate pedagogy which satisfied both teachers and students, even administrators of schools who normally scrutinize results of English learning. Instead of adopting new methods from center-circle countries without screening, they put their unique privilege from traditions into pedagogical methods and made it their own. This newly created pedagogy allowed learners "either to confirm to English social norms and give the socially expected rejoinders, or create their own context of use according to the values cherished in their national, professional, or institutional culture"(Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996, p. 210).

While Canagarajah (1993, 1999), Kramsch and Sullivan (1996), and Sullivan (2000) showed the importance of developing an appropriate pedagogy in EFL contexts, Peirce (1989) examined how teachers and learners of English are attempting to resolve the ambivalent role of English in South Africa by appropriating the language in the interests of freedom and possibility for black South Africans. In order to distinguish newly created English for South Africans from English, they named it 'The People's English'. Based on the spirit of People's English, the South African Council of Higher Education created comic books which contained interesting exercises and which were designed to meet both African traditional education and current needs of English education for South Africans.

Instead of employing textbooks from center-circle countries, they developed the contents of comic books which were consistent with the spirit of 'The People's English' as well as familiar with learners' local lives. Its implementation definitely empowered students to use language in a creative and critical way as well as to develop the ability to deconstruct prevailing discourses in their societies. This is a good example of the application of critical pedagogy in English learning, which eventually empowers students to be critical and to be liberated from dominant discourse.

Implementing English instructions within local culture and developing textbooks to meet learners' local needs are examples of applying principles of critical pedagogy, which emphasizes that learning is interpreted in social-political contexts and that learners should be empowered through learning in order to be free from the dominant power which is derived from English.

3) Language and Project Choice in the Classroom

English-only is a widely recognized fallacy developed by center-circle countries. Although there is a realization that English-only in the class is practically impossible due to several reasons in EFL contexts (such as non-native English teachers' insufficient command of English), this fallacy is still treated to be one of the most important principles to follow in order for learners to achieve better English ability. Under models of reproduction, critical pedagogy regards language as "a socially constructed symbol system that reflects, embodies, and constitutes the values of the speech community" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 23). According to this view, we are constructed and socialized through language. Critical pedagogy insists that language plays an important role in negotiating people's identities, roles, and status in everyday life. In this respect, English-only in the class might be the issue that critical pedagogy would like to point out to be changed the most. Supporting this, Auerbach (1993) stated that evidence from research implied that the rationale used to justify English-only in the classroom was neither pedagogically sound nor conclusive.

Rivera (1999) is a good example to show the effectiveness of allowing freedom of selection of language and projects to students in the English classroom. In this research, students were allowed to use their L1, and their L1 played a role "not only as an aid of learning English but also as a terrain of knowledge and a field of possibilities that linked students' experiences to collective action" (p. 485). Through the use of their L1, students produced new forms of knowledge that made them accessible to the community. Freedom of project selection was given to students after long discussions among students, teachers, and staff. This decision allowed students "to become creators of their own curriculum" (p.498), and allowed students to be the source of knowledge and experience which they

would need to change their social worlds. Rivers (1999)'s study whose students learned English by using L1 showed different results from those of Lin (1999), which divided students in three proficiency levels (i.e., A, B, and C) and did not allow to use L1 in English classes. While L1 use in the class allowed students to connect their personal experiences to the outside world and promoted their self-esteem in Rivers (1999), students in Lin's observation experienced discomfort and reluctance in English learning because of the prohibition of L1 use. L1 use prohibition resulted in lower self-esteem in comparatively low-class students (B and C).

Canagarajah (1999) also showed the effectiveness of L1 use in the instructional process, lesson content, and student interaction and concluded that "accommodation of L1 in English classrooms does not hamper the acquisition of L2 but enhances it" (p. 143).

Going against English-only fallacy of center-circle countries, these above examples revealed that by using students' native language, both students and teachers were empowered to promote the development and legitimization of their own new English. Critical pedagogy in EFL contexts takes as its goals "the simultaneous development of English communicative abilities and the ability to apply them to developing a critical awareness of the world and the ability to act on it to improve matters" (Crookes & Lehner, 1998, p. 320). The way to achieve these goals in the classroom should be determined regarding conditions of local contexts.

The application of critical pedagogy can be observed with several other topics in addition to these three. Non-native teacher's identity (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Medgyes, 1992), ownership of English (Nayer, 1994, 1997; Norton, 1997), and multicultural education (Kubota, 1999) are among those. In spite of the fact that these issues have received great attention from English educators in the situation that the number of English learners increases and that there is an urgent need to establish identity and ownership of English for English teachers, English teachers in EFL situation are paying little attention to these issues. For instance, although there are a number of native English teachers in EFL, English teachers do not have inferior identity or feel oppressed because most teachers are still non-native speakers in English (Jeon & Park, 2004).

It has generally been assumed that the ultimate goal of English language learners is to achieve native-like competence in the language. This assumption is expressed by many researchers maintaining the use of 'native-speaker competence' or 'native-like proficiency' (McKay, 2003). Having this assumption provides several underlying suppositions to Second Language Theory (SLT) such as that the learner's target of acquisition of English is native-like competence, and that "the process of acquisition is not viewed with reference to the functions that English serves within the local community" (McKay, 2003, p. 6). In addition, it evoked a phenomenon for non-English speaking countries to adopt native speaker-only fallacy which does not fit into their local situations. However, in the current

situation that English is not treated as just a language for English native speakers but as a global language for international purposes, the prevalent suppositions that are assumed to be underlying SLT should be changed. Apparently, teaching English as an international language requires the development of an appropriate pedagogy which satisfies English learning purpose of language learners within their particular social-cultural contexts (McKay, 2003; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996). Besides, it should be by implementing learning materials designed for them based on their cultural elements (Pierce, 1989).

Critical pedagogy requires English teachers to instruct students in more localized environments and asks students to connect their experiences acquired from classroom learning to larger social patterns. Most of all, critical pedagogy requires language learners to realize unconsciously embedded domination from the center-circle countries on their lives through English and to change this situation through participation and action.

IV. CRITIQUES TO APPLICATION OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN EFL CONTEXTS

Even though there is some research dealing with critical pedagogy in EFL contexts, little research showed how materials, lesson plans, classroom activities, assessment tools, and course designs, etc. could be modified in order to apply critical pedagogy in the classroom. Most research dealt with critical pedagogy in a philosophical position. This phenomenon might be probably due to the difficulty to conduct empirical research or observations in the local contexts or due to the fact that critical pedagogy does not in itself constitute a method (Johnston, 1999). Crookes and Lehner (1998) stated that “critical pedagogy should be seen as a social and educational process rather than just as a pedagogical method” (p.327). However, what is urgently needed for teachers is methodologies which teachers can apply in their classroom activities.

The application of critical pedagogy has been performed by individual teachers. However, there are not established methods of teaching, or recommended techniques from critical pedagogy (Ewald, 1999). Due to this, critical pedagogy places unreasonable expectations on teachers. Critical pedagogy requires teachers to be aware of political implications of English, to develop the way student can realize those implications, and to empower students to be liberated. Teachers should establish teaching goals which satisfy students’ needs as well as institutional needs. In addition, teachers should be aware of the needs and conditions of local contexts where English learning occurs. The fact that teachers have a great responsibility in the class operation could make a one-way relationship with students and therefore, it is easy to put students in a passive role in English classrooms (Cox & Assis-Peterson, 1999). With respect to the fact that critical

pedagogy was originated with the purpose of emancipation from unequal power relationships, requesting extraordinary abilities from teachers should be reconsidered when implementing critical pedagogy in EFL classrooms.

Most literature of critical pedagogy has explored ways in which teachers can empower their students and establish equal relationships between them (e.g., Peirce, 1989; Sullivan, 2000). However, unequal power relations are a permanent feature of educational settings. Although students can be more or less empowered through participating in the design of their own courses and taking more responsibility for their own learning, teachers still retain authority in the classroom. This was also pointed out by other researchers (e.g., Ellsworth, 1989; Ewald, 1999; Johnson, 1999): "Power is not a property, something the teacher can give to students" (Johnson, 1999, p. 560). Using L1 or implementing local texts in the classroom was determined by teachers after all. Even though this decision reflects students' tacit request and resistance, it was teachers that made a final decision for their class operation.

In EFL classrooms, most learners and administrators are unlikely to be familiar with critical pedagogy. In addition, it is not rare that the learning purpose of students is not identical to that of critical pedagogy. For example, in Korea, administrators expect teachers to adopt a communicative approach through English-only with the purpose of developing native-like communicative competence of students (Lee, 2000). Students believe that English-only and a communicative approach are better for improving their English ability. In addition, students do not consider English as a symbol of imperialism or dominant power. To them, English is a means for them to have an opportunity to experience different worlds (Lee, 2000; Nunan, 2003). In this situation, teachers who would apply critical pedagogy to their classrooms with the aim of providing opportunities for learners to participate in activities which can make them be aware of the political implications of English learning may be frustrated. In addition, the different intentions of English instructions between students and a teacher in the classroom will create tension between them.

Finally, some critical pedagogy scholars argue that the prestigious status of English to other languages will create inferior feelings of other language users and will devalue indigenous languages (Johnston, 1999). However, in EFL contexts, English is a foreign language, not a second language like in ESL contexts. Most of the time, students use their L1. There are no ways three or four hours of exposure to English in school threatens the status of mother languages and devalues students' own culture. Furthermore, as seen from studies in Bisong (1995) and Vavrus (2002), most EFL countries emphasize the importance of their languages. There is no doubt that EFL countries do not have an intention to devalue their own languages by encouraging the use of English. In EFL contexts, English is instructed for pragmatic reasons to the extent it does not threaten the

status of mother languages. Therefore, English instruction focusing on only political implications of English does not seem appropriate in EFL contexts.

Applying critical pedagogy to EFL contexts obviously opens new points of view to English education. It definitely brought some benefits. However, it is true that there are some limitations of applying critical pedagogy in EFL contexts. It is not intended to say that we should know each limitation in detail. The important thing is to acknowledge limitations and to find out the way to supplement limitations in order to apply critical pedagogy to EFL contexts in an appropriate way.

V. CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND KOREAN ELT

Korean English education has been shaped with a great influence from pedagogies developed by center-circle countries. This can be observed from one example that Korean Ministry of Education recommended English-only classroom although English is foreign language to Korean students (Kwon, 2003). Due to the influence from center-circle countries, most principles of center-circle ELT seem to be accepted with few questions. English native speaker-only fallacy, English-only fallacy, and authentic materials are general norms in Korean English education. Therefore, despite that most of the English teachers in public English education are Korean, the ideal English teacher is always portrayed as native English speakers among teachers, students, parents, and administrators. In addition, any English native speakers are treated as a more authentic source of English than Korean English teachers.

English education in Korea emphasizes the importance of understanding the culture of center-circle countries and focuses on delivering knowledge of English. Therefore, some contents of text books cover cultures of center-circle countries although most Korean students might not encounter in future and lean on the belief that native English speaker will bring the light to the dark and helpless English language educational situation in Korea (Park, 2008). In addition, since American culture has been influencing Korean society for over 50 years, American standard for English is likely to be considered as global standard for English (Min, 2006).

However, recently, researchers who insist on the adoption of the view of critical pedagogy in English education have appeared (e.g., Choi, 2001; Lee, 2000; Park, 2006, 2008). These researchers mentioned that the center-circle country-centered ELT has mislead Korean learners of English by over-generalizing and stereotyping English speakers and their language and cultures as superior (Lee, 2007; Park, 2008). These researchers also pointed out that Korean English learners might come to have low interest and motivation in English learning since center-circle countries' ELT principles have brought in their own set

of issues, concerns, setbacks and challenges which are not fitted into Korean social contexts (Kwon, 2003).

Although some researchers attempted to explain the needs of critical pedagogy for Korean ELT development by pointing out the resulted problems from the adoption of center-circle countries' ELT principles, and several critiques regarding the application of critical pedagogy in EFL contests were already provided in EFL contexts, there are still some problems to apply critical pedagogy in the classroom of Korean public institutions. In Korea, English has been regarded as a means to achieve a better social status (Kwon, 2003; Park, 2008). Korean students recognize the power of English and take advantage of the power for them to get a better position in future Korean society. What this means is that instead of transforming the unequal social structures through acquired knowledge of English, they use this knowledge to maintain and raise their social status. This phenomenon might be understood by considering the fact that students who are given English instruction intensively and extensively in Korea are from prestigious social levels and they are likely to enter prestigious universities. In Korea, English plays a great part in the university entrance exam and students graduating from prestigious universities can pursue career paths that differ from the ones pursued by their peers from less prestigious universities. The aim of critical pedagogy is to develop a critical awareness of the world and to transform the social inequality. However, one of the main outcomes of Korean English education is to reproduce the unequal social status.

Traditionally, teachers have received a great honor and respect from societies. Moreover, the new national university entrance examination format provides more authority to teachers by including students' academic records evaluated by teachers into evaluation criteria for the admission. Entering a prestigious university is the purpose of most students to study in Korean public schools. Due to the new examination format, the relation between teachers and students cannot be seen as equal. From the respect that critical pedagogy intends to realize the equality among class participants, Korean English classes do not provide a good foundation to apply it.

Most of all, the biggest problem in applying critical pedagogy to Korean English classes is that most Korean English teachers are not aware of the necessity of application of critical pedagogy to their classes, not to mention how to apply critical pedagogy to the class and what to do for that. For instance, investigating the complex and uncertain resistance of non-native English teachers' circle and their endeavor of social reconstruction in an EFL setting, with 50 public secondary teachers in Korea, Jeon and Park (2004) found that the majority of teachers had few experiences of critical perspectives in college course work and that there is an awareness of the domination of so-called standard English, but subtle. They also found that the majority of teachers had reluctance to use English books center-

circle countries produced, but also felt materials from English speaking country could be authentic language input and culture for students' learning.

Researchers who insist on the adoption of critical pedagogy in Korean ELT concluded that indigenousness of language pedagogy seeking the meaning of English education in EFL learners' authentic lives is recommended not only in the field of English teaching but also in textbook production. They also said that teacher education programs could be the program that needs practices of critical pedagogy the most since the teacher is the most important agent in Korean ELT, who can transform his/her class with critical pedagogical view and can help students to develop a critical awareness of the world and an ability to act on it.

VI. CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this paper was to develop a critical point of view to critical pedagogy when applied to EFL contexts. Critical pedagogy is not a solution of problems, but an approach that is used to realize the existence of the problems. Critical pedagogy is more appropriate to be used by English instructors to determine whether their present teaching methods are appropriate or necessary in the consideration of local needs. Applying critical pedagogy should be within a local context. Instead of applying critical pedagogy with global scale perspective which distinguishes social structure as the dichotomy, the dominated and the dominant, and which does not recognize economic benefits of English, applying critical pedagogy in EFL should be from the realization of inappropriateness or confliction which occurs when English pedagogies from center-circle countries are not appropriate to local contexts.

Socio-culture of nations is different from each other as individuals are different from each other. As pointed out in the above, different socio-cultural contexts shape people differently. Although one method of English achieves a great success with one group of people, it doesn't guarantee that it will achieve similar degrees of success with other groups of people. Individual's motivation, purpose, learning habits, and various other factors contribute to their learning results. These days, reasons for learning English are more pragmatic in nature and students do not feel that they are victims of linguistic imperialism against Phillipson (1992)'s argument. Therefore, as Canagarajah (1999) and other researchers pointed out, it might be more important to create an appropriate method of English instruction that fits into learners' social-cultural contexts and to learners' goals.

Being aware of the effect of the socio-politics of English does not mean that we should necessarily abandon the teaching of English or teaching materials developed in center-circle countries. Even though people might worry about reproducing social inequality that

English could produce, awareness of those effects of English can equip people with a critical point of view to their behaviors from English learning. English is an international language in these days and people have come to consider it to have potential to empower learners to change their social worlds. In this situation, English teachers should be aware of the possibility of critical pedagogy in English teaching and learn how to use it in their local contexts. What is more, English teachers should realize that an appropriate pedagogy that satisfies the needs of local contexts as well as those of students and teachers might be achieved by on-going discussion among teachers, students, and school board members.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Elementary/Secondary

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